

Adult Literacy Contact Centre NEWSLETTER



July 1990

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A project of the Adult Basic Education Association of B.C.



1990
INTERNATIONAL LITERACY YEAR



Literacy Survey Data Released by Statistics Canada

Preliminary data from a major Statistics Canada survey intended to assess the functional reading, writing, and numeracy skills of adult Canadians has been released - and the results of the reading skills component indicate that the western provinces have the highest levels of these skills. Data from the study, called "The Survey of Literacy Skills Used in Daily Activities" (LSUDA), which was conducted last fall on behalf of the National Literacy Secretariat, is being released in four stages:

- * Reading Skills - Preliminary Data Highlights
- * Writing and Numeracy Skills - Preliminary Data Highlights
- * Public Use Microdata File of the complete survey
- * Overview

The Reading Skills highlights were released in early June; the Numeracy Skills highlights, released as an insert to the first component, have just been released (July 23). The Writing Skills package has been delayed until early September but the Microdata File is available now through Statistics Canada, Ottawa, and the full analysis of the survey data (Overview) will be released some time this fall.

The Survey consisted of interviews (in Canada's two official languages only) administered to individuals in their homes and involved a series of tasks designed to test reading, writing and numeracy activities commonly encountered in daily life. A representative sample of ap-

proximately 9,500 persons aged 16 to 69 attempted some or all of the tasks designed to measure their literacy skills. For the purpose of the survey, literacy was defined as: "The information processing skills necessary to use the printed material commonly encountered at work, at home and in the community." From this definition, skill levels were defined according to the abilities required to accomplish a variety of activities. (For reading, the abilities ranged from locating a word or item in a document to more complex abilities involving integration of information from various parts of a document.)

Reading skills were divided into four levels. A summary of the Reading Skills results indicates that:

- * 62% of Canadian adults aged 16-69 are at Level 4: they can meet most everyday reading demands and their skills enable them to acquire further knowledge using written material. 69% of the adult population in B.C., Alberta and Saskatchewan are at this level.
- * 22% of adult Canadians 16-69 are at Level 3: they can carry out simple reading tasks within familiar contexts with materials that are clearly laid out, but cannot cope with unfamiliar, more complex content.
- * 16% are at Levels 1 and 2: they cannot deal with the majority of written material encountered in everyday life, and can use printed materials only for limited purposes, such as locating a familiar word in a simple text.

The Reading Skills Highlights package, which includes a Survey Overview and a guide to the literacy levels used in administering the survey, and the Numeracy Skills insert, are available free of charge in B.C. from:

Continued from p. 1

Statistics Canada Advisory Services
Third Floor, Federal Building
757 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6C 3C9
Telephone: 666-3691 (Lower
Mainland)
1-800-663-1551 (toll-free in B.C.)

Anyone interested in further details may contact (in Vancouver) Yasmin Jiwani, Information Officer, Statistics Canada, at 666-2042 or 666-2043.

An information document which provides background to the survey (including its relationship to other studies, facts about the sample, questionnaires, and the forthcoming survey data products), is also available. Contact:

Statistics Canada
Gilles Montigny (613) 951-9731
or Scott Murray (613) 951-9476
Fax for both (613) 951-0562
Or:

National Literacy Secretariat
Tom Brecher (819) 953-5283

The Public Use Microdata File, which at present contains everything except the Writing Skills highlights, consists of an individual computer record for each survey respondent. This record includes the characteristics measured by the questionnaire, individual task scores, and a reading, writing and numeracy skill level for each respondent.

"The Microfile contains all the information we collected from each respondent to the survey," explains Gilles Montigny, Projects Manager, Special Surveys Group, Statistics Canada. "It is designed to assist researchers or organizations to study a particular population - for example, the B.C. segment of the survey." A package of summary tables, available with the Microfile, consists of "literacy profiles" for Canada, the regions and, where possible, the provinces, showing the population

distribution by levels for each of the three skills.

An analytical paper of the complete survey, originally intended to be ready for release on September 8, will be published this fall, adds Montigny.

First Provincial Learners' Conference Held at Pearson College

On June 16 one hundred delegates from all over the province gathered at Pearson College in Victoria for the first B.C. Provincial Learners' Conference. A joint project of Malaspina College and A.L.L.O.W., the Nanaimo based learners group, the conference generated a "profound feeling of empowerment and comradeship" among the delegates, says Lynn Hunter of Malaspina College. Hunter and five representatives from A.L.L.O.W. formed a committee which planned and organized the conference, with funding from the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology and the National Literacy Secretariat, Secretary of State.

Wayne Kingston, President of A.L.L.O.W. and a member of the planning committee, summed up the sense of sharing which was expressed by delegates: "I didn't know there were so many people like me." Kingston added, "An illiterate person will open up to another illiterate person.....that's what governments and industries have to see, human beings crying out for help. If there's that much pain out there then we have to address that pain - and it's going to cost."

Kingston attributed a large part of the success of the conference to the participation of the Adventure Challenge students from Pearson Col-

lege. (Adventure Challenge is a program which brings selected groups of people from the community to share outdoor and cultural experiences with students from the College.) In organizing cultural and recreational activities such as sailing and rock climbing - activities described by some delegates as "thrilling" and "remarkable" - Adventure Challenge contributed to the uniqueness and success of the conference, he said.

A list of names and addresses of all participants will be distributed to help maintain the networks and bonds of friendship which formed as a result of the Conference. Lynn Hunter has requested anyone with photographs from the conference who would like to share them with others to send copies to her which will then be distributed with the list. Her address is 387 Black Diamond Drive, Nanaimo, B.C., V9R 6H7. Hunter also expressed the hope that, in the aftermath of the conference, learners will find the support they need in their communities to maintain the momentum generated over four days at Pearson College. In the words of Linda Chapman, a delegate from Nanaimo, "After this conference I hope to go back home ... and do a lot of work to get other people to understand more than they know and find some funds or get some action going. If I can improve illiteracy any way then I will."

Conference Offers a Global View on Correctional Education

For the first time in its history, the 45th International Conference of the Correctional Education Association (CEA) was held outside the United States, reports Hendrik Hoekema, Coordinator of Simon Fraser University's Prison Education and Off-

Campus Programs and Exhibitor Coordinator for the conference. He adds that this was also the first truly international conference of the CEA with approximately 750 delegates from 19 different countries in attendance at the Hotel Vancouver from July 8 - 11. With the theme "International Perspectives on Correctional Education" the conference provided delegates with a global view of "what works and what doesn't work" in prison education, says Hoekema. He adds that the conference also raised issues concerning the nature of education in prisons - should correctional education be compulsory or voluntary and should it follow a corrections or an adult education model?

A selection of papers from the conference will be published in the 1991 Yearbook of Correctional Education. The 1990 Yearbook is now available from the Institute for the Humanities, Simon Fraser University, 291-3848.

Looking at the Roots of Crime

Crime prevention through social development - that's the theme of a conference entitled "Building Safer Communities: An Integrated Approach," scheduled for September 27-30 at the Delta River Inn in Richmond. Hosted by the B.C. Crime Prevention Association in partnership with a coalition of community and government agencies, the conference will reverse past concentration on apprehension and incarceration to focus on understanding and addressing the social causes of crime.

Participants will have the opportunity to explore the following questions: Who is committing crimes and why? What actions can communities take to

tackle the social problems which lead to crime? How can existing social services be effectively integrated and directed to those in the community most at risk of becoming offenders? With literacy one of the social issues examined at the conference, of particular interest to literacy practitioners will be a workshop entitled "Social Development: A Catalyst for Crime Prevention" in which Dick Nolan, Director General of the National Literacy Secretariat, Secretary of State, will speak. For further information contact (in Vancouver) Patti Pearcey, Solicitor General, 666-5307 or Marjorie Schurman, Secretary of State, 666-6619.

Launching the 90's from Edmonton at The Literacy Conference

Volunteers, students, representatives of business and industry, teachers, adult educators, researchers, professors and the public - all are invited to participate in "The Literacy Conference" at the Edmonton Convention Centre October 9 - 12. Six interest-area tracks will be offered:

- *Administration
- *English as a Second Language
- *Learners
- *Practitioners
- *Research
- *Special Interests

Featured speakers include:

- *Peter Calamai, author of Broken Words, the 1987 survey of illiteracy in Canada by Southam News
- *Mike Fox, Executive Director of Push Literacy Action Now (PLAN), a community-based adult literacy program in Washington, D.C.
- * Paulo Freire (in an exclusive

videotaped interview), Minister of Education for the city of Sao Paulo, Brazil, and author of Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1972) and Education for a Critical Consciousness (1974)

* Jonathon Kozol, author of Illiterate America (1985)

For further information contact:

The Literacy Conference
Conference Management Centre
Grant MacEwan Community College
Seventh Street Plaza Campus
208, 10030 - 107 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 3E4

Phone: (403) 441-4668

Fax: (403) 441-4893

Adult Literacy Contact Centre Newsletter

622 - 510 W. Hastings St.
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1L8
1-800-663-1293 Toll-free in B.C.
684-0624 Lower Mainland
684-8520 Facsimile

The Adult Literacy Contact Centre is a project of the Adult Basic Education Association of B.C. and is jointly funded by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology, and the National Literacy Secretariat.

The Centre welcomes receiving your literacy news by phone, fax or mail. We reserve the right to edit written submissions for the newsletter.

The newsletter is available free of charge to any individual or agency upon request.

Movement for Literacy by Learners in Kelowna

A new learners group has formed in Kelowna in the aftermath of a regional learners conference held in April. The Literacy Learners Movement of Kelowna is comprised of learners from both Project Literacy Kelowna and Okanagan College. Literacy B.C. Okanagan Valley representative Ken Reich, one of the organizers, described the Movement's aims:

- to support and motivate other learners struggling to meet their educational and life goals
- to help with life problems which learners may not feel comfortable discussing with tutors and coordinators
- to meet as a social club
- to provide a formal voice for Kelowna area learners
- to act as a group to help bring in new learning materials such as computers, video cassette recorders and books

Currently looking for a permanent meeting place, the group meets on the second Tuesday of every month. Contact: Ken Reich in Kelowna, 861-8002.

Our Own Words, Summer 1990

*In times of great sorrow and confusion
there has been a presence
that I have felt
a source of heroic power
that has pulled me back to the crest*

*I have often wondered what it is
that helps me to rise again
then one time
I dared to face it
and I saw . . . myself*

"Courage," by Ronda Tilley of Fraser Valley College, is just one of the selections published in the second edition of Our Own Words, a collection of writings by adult basic education students enrolled in British Columbia's community colleges.

Copies of Our Own Words - a project funded by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology - are available upon request from the Adult Literacy Contact Centre: 684-0624 in the Lower Mainland and 1-800-663-1293, toll-free in B.C.

Why the Reluctant Learner?

Why do people not participate in adult literacy programs and why do others drop out? Some reasons and perspectives are examined in The Reluctant Learner: A Research Report on Non-participation and Dropout in Literacy Programs in British Columbia. This exploratory study by Audrey Thomas, B.C. author and researcher, combines the results from discussions with seven literacy classes, 61 personal interviews, and 56 telephone interviews in different parts of the province. Copies of the report are available from:

Provincial Curriculum Publications
Marketing Department
Open Learning Agency
P.O. Box 94000
Richmond, B.C.
V6Y 2A2

Phone: 660-7780 or 660-2190
Toll-free in British Columbia: 1-800-663-1786
Fax: 660-2272

Price: \$7.10 in B.C., the Yukon and the Northwest Territories; \$8.90 in the rest of Canada.

Registration Still Open for NewsAble Workshops

Registration remains open until August 17 for the series of free workshops to be held this fall to introduce NewsAble - the new learning tool for adult literacy practitioners. NewsAble is part of an International Literacy Year project co-sponsored by CODE, the Canadian Organization for Development through Education, and the Canadian Community Newspapers Association. Using the local newspaper as resource material, NewsAble is designed as a tool to lead the adult learner through the various components of a community newspaper. An accompanying course manual guides the literacy teacher through the program. The workshops, led by Peter Millar of the Ontario Community Newspapers Association, will familiarize literacy practitioners with the NewsAble approach and manuals. They will also provide a forum for participants to contribute their own ideas and expertise to the NewsAble approach.

The B.C. workshops will be held at the following locations:

Vancouver, Sheraton Landmark
September 28, 1990
Nanaimo, Coast Bastion Inn
October 2, 1990
Kamloops, Travelodge
October 4, 1990

Register through the Adult Literacy Contact Centre: 684-0624 in the Lower Mainland and 1-800-663-1293 toll-free in B.C.

LITERACY B.C. UPDATE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR LITERACY B.C.

Literacy B.C. has hired an Executive Director. Linda Mitchell, currently Executive Director of Victoria R.E.A.D. Society and former Chair of Project Literacy Victoria, will begin work for Literacy B.C. in September 1990. For further information contact Lee Weinstein, Chair of Literacy B.C., at 584-5424.

PL ABBOTSFORD-MATSQUI

Contact: Cynthia Andruske
Wendy Watson
Fraser Valley College
33844 King Road
Abbotsford, B.C.
Phone: 853-7441

"The Literacy Players" from PL Abbotsford/Matsqui performed Marks on Paper at the provincial learners conference in June at Pearson College. Performances of the play are staged to raise funds for the literacy in the workplace project at MSA Hospital in Abbotsford.

FORT ST. JOHN LITERACY SOCIETY

Contact: Romi Haseo
Fort St. John Public Library
10349 - 100th Street
Fort St. John, B.C. V1J 3Z2
Phone: 785-3731

Romi Haseo reports that this group, still in the process of becoming a society, is currently involved in

developing ideas for fundraising activities. Radio ads were aired earlier this month in conjunction with the library and names of tutors and learners interested in participating in a literacy program are being collected. There is also local interest in starting a learners support group. The next meeting of the Fort St. John Literacy Society is on August 27.

FRASER VALLEY EAST LITERACY ASSOCIATION

Contact: Gail Newby
45405 Stevenson Road
Sardis, B.C. V2R 1M2
Phone: 858-4913

This group has put its activities on hold until the fall. The next scheduled meeting is September 12.

PL GREATER VANCOUVER

Contact: Hendrik Hoekema
Simon Fraser University
Burnaby, B.C. V5A 1S6
Phone: 291-3298

PLGV will not meet during July and August and the next meeting is scheduled for September 28 in the 5th floor Board Room, King Edward Campus, Vancouver Community College at 9:00 a.m.

PL HOUSTON

Contact: Sandi Lavallie
c/o Northwest Community College
P.O. Box 1277
Houston, B.C.
V0J 1Z0
Phone: 875-7266

On July 12 nine volunteers (tutors and learners) met at the Chamber of Commerce in Houston to discuss the aims and objectives of a new literacy society: Project Literacy Houston. For the past five years approximately 35 - 40 adults have learned to read with the help of a group of volunteer tutors but without any formal organization, says Marilyn Hinton, who helped facilitate Project Literacy's development in Houston. The group has now applied for society status and plans are underway to implement a formal tutoring program with tutor training in the fall. Other planned activities include participating in the local library board's information booth in the mall for World Literacy Day on September 8.

PL KELOWNA

Contact: Maxine Veach (Coordinator)
Betty Knox (President)
P.O. Box 1886, Station A,
Kelowna, B.C. V1Y 8P2
Phone: 762-2163

Our Words, the first book of writings by Kelowna area literacy students, now has a laminated cover and will be sold in local bookstores. Maxine Veach reports that the excitement on publication of Our Words is still running high and many learners are already looking forward to producing another book.

LITERACY B.C. UPDATE

LITERACY KITIMAT

Contact: Janette Camazzola
c/o Kitimat Community Services
Society
#201 - 370 City Centre
Kitimat, B.C. V8C 1T6
Phone: 632-3927

Literacy Kitimat wishes to hear from anyone in the B.C. literacy community who can share information on: tutoring methods for brain-damaged adults; materials for housebound ESL students; and tutoring methods/materials for students in correctional institutes. Contact Ms. Camazzola at her home number (above) while the Society is closed during the month of August.

LITERACY NANAIMO

Contact: Carolyn McWhinnie
#314 - 350 Terminal Avenue
Nanaimo, B.C. V9S 4J7
Phone: 754-1704

A reading circle for children was part of Literacy Nanaimo's contribution to the July 1 Canada Day celebrations at Bowen Park. On behalf of Literacy Nanaimo, books were presented to schoolchildren - winners of the poster contest sponsored by the Nanaimo Canada Day Committee - by Wayne Kingston, President of A.L.L.O.W.

Carolyn McWhinnie reports that there has been a tremendous response to "The Great Nanaimo Book Sale", a fundraising project for the group's planned downtown learning centre. The next meeting of Literacy Nanaimo is on Tuesday, September 4 at 7:00 p.m.

PL PARKSVILLE/QUALICUM

Contact: Linda Perkins
The Write Place
192A Morison Avenue
Parksville, B.C. V0R 2S0
Phone: 248-4041 or 248-4042

The winning submission to the "Name the Newsletter Contest" at The Write Place was The Write Review. Selected by a committee comprised of a learner, tutor, staff member and board member, the winner received a \$50.00 certificate for dinner at a Parksville restaurant. The Write Review will be published every two months.

The Write Place is actively promoting literacy in the workplace and is working with A & W to implement an on-site program reports staff member Liz Campbell. A & W has agreed to provide space for the program and to pay 50% of an employee's wages while he or she is attending the program.

PL PRINCE GEORGE

Contact: Murry Krause
Coordinator, United Way
Box 494
Prince George, B.C. V2L 4S6
Phone: 561-1040
Fax: 562-8102

PL PRINCE RUPERT

Contact: Sheila Lid
1920 Atlin Avenue
Prince Rupert, B.C. V8J 1E8
Phone: 624-6698 or 627-7178

The group has discontinued activity for the summer and will resume meeting in September.

PL SUNSHINE COAST

Contact: Mary Pinnigar
c/o Continuing Education
S.D. #46
P.O. Box 888,
Sechelt, B.C.
Phone: 885-2991

PL SURREY/DELTA

Contact: Bev Yaworsky, Surrey
Public Library
Phone: 591-4312 or:
Ene Haabnit, Newton Public Library
Phone: 596-7401

Plans are still underway for a literacy event at Surrey Place Mall on World Literacy Day, September 8. The next meeting of PL Surrey/Delta is on Friday, September 21 at 2:00 p.m. in the Whalley Library.

PL TERRACE

Contact: Jake Muller
Northwest Community College
P.O. Box 726
Terrace, B.C. V8G 4C2
Phone: 635-6511 Local 255
Fax: 635-3511

LITERACY B.C. UPDATE

PL VICTORIA

Contact: Donna Oswald-Miller
c/o Sooke School District
Continuing Education
3143 Jacklin Road
Victoria, B.C., V9B 5R1
Phone: 478-5800

Contact: The Learners' Network
720 Linden Avenue
Victoria, B.C. V8V 4G7
Phone: 381-3755

PL Victoria Chair Linda Mitchell has been appointed new Executive Director for Literacy B.C. and will begin work for Literacy B.C. in September. "Linda was one of the founding members of Project Literacy Victoria and served as the chairperson of the Interim Board of Directors," said Susan Kurushima of the Learners' Network. "She also represented Camosun College region on the Board of Directors of Literacy B.C. and coordinated the plans for the Peter Gzowski Invitational Golf Tournament in Victoria. Linda will be greatly missed by Project Literacy Victoria."

Plans are now underway for the second annual Gzowski Golf Tournament which will be held September 21 at the Uplands Golf Club to raise money for Project Literacy Victoria programs. Limited tickets are still available. Contact Linda Mitchell at 388-7225.

Sooke School District's Adult Learning Centre will reopen in September in a new location in the Dogwood Centre, 2720 Jacklin Road, Victoria, B.C., 474-2175.

LITERACY B.C. WEST KOOTENAYS

Contact: Judy Wearmouth
Castlegar Public Library
1005-3rd Street
Castlegar, B.C. V1N 2A2
Phone: 365-7765

Most of the activity in Project Literacy West Kootenay is at present geared towards public awareness of the society and what it hopes to achieve this year, reports Judy Wearmouth. A float designed as an open book appeared in Nelson's Midsummer Bonspiel Parade and won second prize. Plans for World Literacy Day include putting the same float in the Rossland City Days parade, also on September 8. Wormsworth, the B.C. Library Association's reading program mascot and literacy symbol, will appear in that parade. The society hopes to have special Wormsworth appearances in other West Kootenay centres throughout the day.

Letters will go out to the mayors of each city asking them to proclaim the week prior to September 8 Literacy Week. Individual librarians are being asked to put on literacy displays in and outside of their libraries. An idea for an appearance by Edmonton Oiler Kevin Lowe is also in the works. Co-ordinator Sue Port attended an interministerial congress in Castlegar and requested a sermon on literacy from each pulpit on Sunday, September 9.

The society is still awaiting news about its grant request which is in Stage 2 of the approval process. In the meantime, the coordinator is

working as a volunteer and coaching one basic learner twice a week. Tutor training is planned for the fall prior to the implementation of a one-to-one tutoring program.

PL WILLIAMS LAKE

Contact: Debby DeMare
P.O. Box 4596
Williams Lake, B.C. V2G 2V6
Phone: 398-8400

Debby DeMare reports that PL Williams Lake is planning an exhibit at the Boitano Mall for World Literacy Day on September 8. Representatives from both PL Williams Lake and LIFFE - Literacy is Freedom for Everyone - will be present and the exhibit will showcase some of the student writing from the area. Activities will also include a raffle and bake sale.

A tutor sharing session was held in July providing tutors with an opportunity to share ideas, experiences and problems.

The Adult Literacy Contact Centre provides information and encouragement by phone to adults who want to upgrade their skills through adult basic education. Our toll-free number for learners outside the Lower Mainland is:

1-800-663-1293

Message from the Contact Centre

The Contact Centre now has additional hours of phone service for adults who want information about ABE programs but who are unable to call during the day and do not want to leave a message on our answering machine: our phone lines are answered in person on Wednesday evenings until 9:00 p.m.

This new service is at the suggestion of learners who participated in the Adult Literacy Contact Centre workshop at the Provincial Learners' Conference in June (see story on p.2). Our warmest thanks to all who were in the workshop. We hope to carry out many more of your creative and enthusiastic suggestions.

We are also pleased to announce that the Contact Centre now has a facsimile number: 684-8520. We especially hope that this will be welcomed by many of our newsletter readers as a convenience in sending us news items.

We recommend that newsletter submissions be sent to us by the third Friday of the month in order to be included in that month's newsletter.

* * *

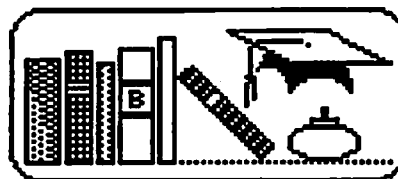
Literacy posters developed by the Public Awareness Campaign (one of B.C.'s 1989/90 cost-shared projects) are now ready. The full colour posters measuring 16 1/4" x 22" say "Learn to Read... Help Others to Read... Yes I Can" and feature a dramatic image of the world opening up as a book. The Adult Literacy Contact Centre's Lower Mainland and toll-free phone numbers are also displayed. Copies of the poster are available upon request from the Contact Centre.

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CORRECTION: The prize in the Movement for Canadian Literacy's National Literacy Poster Contest is a trip to Ottawa — not New York as reported in the June newsletter.

SITE '90 Celebrates International Literacy Year

Literacy is the theme of Simon Fraser University's SITE '90 (Summer Institute for Teacher Education) free public lecture series. The final three sessions of the series, which is entitled "Voice/Text/Image: Education for a Post-Literate Culture," will take place August 2, 7 and 9 at 12:30 p.m. on SFU's Burnaby campus. Topics include "Physical Culture: The Embodiment of Technology" and "Opening Up the Text: Literacy in the Postmodern Classroom." For further information call SFU at 291-3395.



Literacy Lapel Pins Available



ILY pin

Lapel pins distributed by the Movement for Canadian Literacy can be ordered for \$3.00 each from the Adult Literacy Contact Centre. Pins are available in two designs: the Literacy



Literacy Symbol pin

Symbol (international) and the logo for International Literacy Year. To order pins (available while supplies last) call the Contact Centre: 684-0624 in the Lower Mainland and 1-800-663-1293 toll-free in B.C.

Fraser Valley College Proclaims Year of Literacy for 1990/91

The Board of Fraser Valley College (FVC) has proclaimed 1990/91 as the Year of Literacy at the college and approved three recommendations: beginning in September 1990 students enrolling in the ABE fundamental level program will not be required to pay tuition fees; a Literacy Steering Committee will be struck to address literacy issues at FVC; ESL is declared a priority at FVC for the next five years while the college's level of service is brought up to the per capita level of service to the general population.